

***Kyllinga polyphylla* Willd. ex Kunth (Cyperaceae): A new record for India**

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Abstract

Kyllinga polyphylla Willd. ex Kunth (Cyperaceae) is reported for the first time from India, and described with illustrations.

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Kyllinga* has about 40-45 species (Tucker, 1987) which are distributed in temperate, subtropical and tropical regions of both the hemispheres

During the course of floristic studies in Kerala, specimens of one interesting species of *Kyllinga* has been collected from the costal districts of Kerala which did not match with any of the 6 species so far recorded from India. On detailed studies and reference of relevant literature (Koyama, 1985), it was identified as *Kyllinga polyphylla* Willd. ex Kunth. It is a native of Tropical Africa and recorded to have been introduced in Sri Lanka, Malesia, Fiji and West Indies. However, so far there is no record of the occurrence of this species in India. Therefore, it is being reported here as a new record for India with detailed descriptions and illustrations.

Kyllinga polyphylla Willd. ex Kunth, Enum. Pl. 2: 134. 1837; Koyama, Gard. Bull. Singapore 30: 163. 1977 & in Dassan. & Fosb., Rev. Handb. Fl. Ceylon 5: 247. 1985 (Fig. 1).

Kyllinga aromatica Ridl., Trans. Linn. Soc. London 2: 146. 1884.

Cyperus aromaticus (Ridl.) Mattfeld & Kükenth. in Engl., Pflanzenr. IV. 20 (101): 581. 1936; Koyama, Bot. Mag. (Tokyo) 83: 186. 1970; Kern, Fl. Males. I, 7(3): 656. 1974.

C.N. Sunil and M. Sivadasan

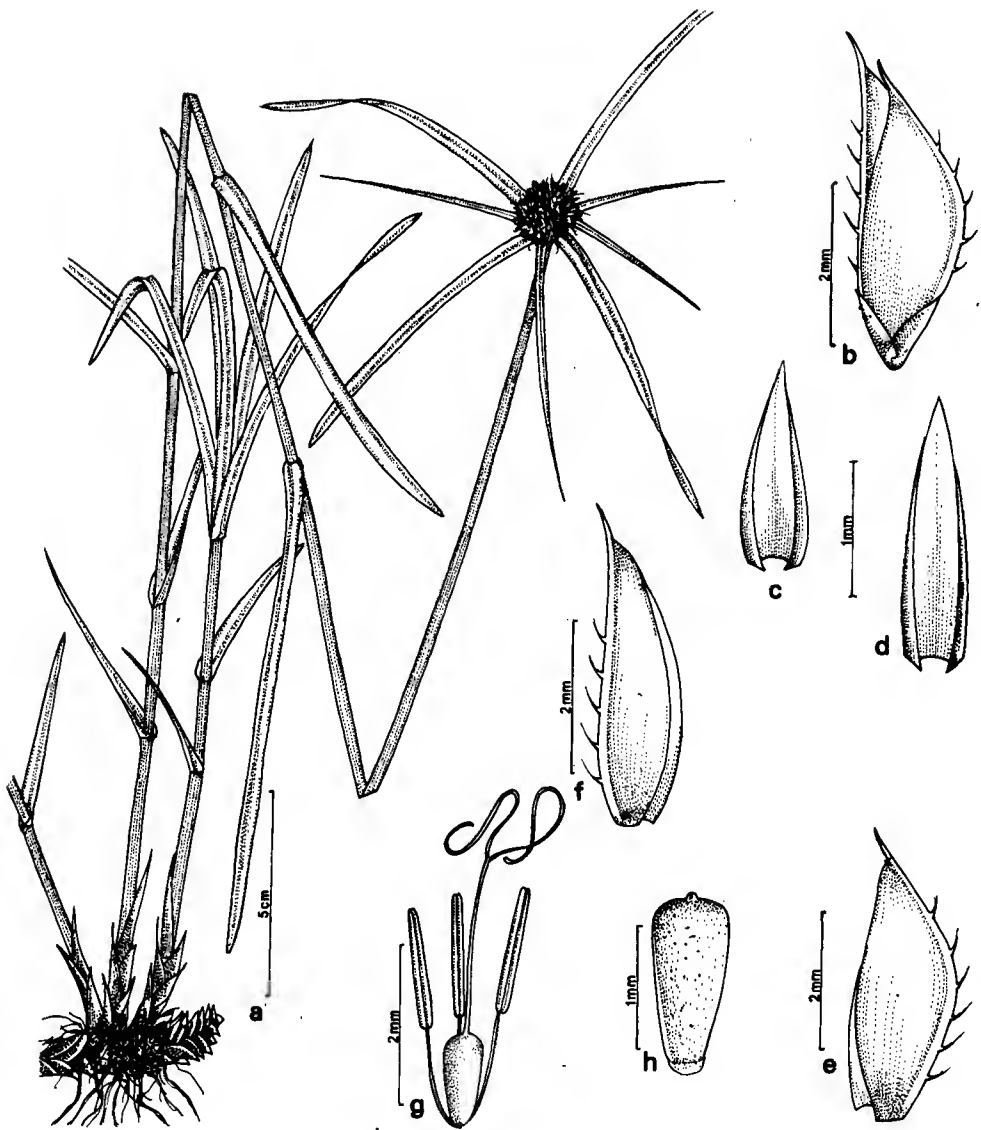


Fig. 1. *Kyllinga polyphylla* Willd. ex Kunth. a: Habit; b. Spikelet; c. First glume; d. Second glume; e. Third glume; f. Fourth glume; g. Stamens and pistil; h. Nut.

***Kyllinga polyphylla* Willd. ex Kunth (Cyperaceae)**

Erect, rhizomatous perennials; rhizome horizontally creeping, 4-7 mm thick, knotty, clothed with purplish-brown scales. Culms arranged in a row along the rhizome, close together, erect, 24-79 cm tall, 2-4 mm thick below, triquetrous; angles smooth or slightly scabrid towards apex. Leaves usually confined to the base, 3 or 8 to a culm, short; lower 1 or 2 leaves reduced to nearly bladeless sheaths and stained with purplish-brown, upper ones with blade 3-20 cm long and 4-7 mm wide, linear, acute. Inflorescence head-like with 1-4 spikes, 7-14 mm long and 7-15 mm wide, ovoid, pale green; leafy bracts 5-8, patent or reflexed, 2.5-18 cm long, 2-7 mm wide, linear, margins scabrid, apex acute to acuminate. Spikelets sessile, 3-4 x 1.5-2 mm, oblong-elliptic to ovate-elliptic, 2-flowered. Glumes 4-5, distichous; lower two sterile, 1.5-2 x c. 1 mm, lanceolate, acute, membranous; 3rd glume bisexual, 3-4 mm long, ovate-lanceolate, strongly folded with spinulose, green keel projecting beyond glume apex forming an erect mucro c. 0.5 mm long; 4th glume male or empty, 3-4 mm long, ovate-lanceolate, strongly folded with spinulose green keel, mucronate; 5th glume if present sterile and membranous. Stamens 3; anthers 2-3 mm long, yellow, apiculate. Ovary c. 1 mm long, obovate; style 2-2.5 mm long; stigma 2-fid. Nut c. 1.5 x 1 mm, ovate-oblong or obovate, lenticular, rounded to apiculate at apex, dark brown in colour when mature.

Flowering and fruiting: September-May.

Distribution: Tropical Africa and Madagascar; introduced in Sri Lanka, Malesia, Fiji Islands and West Indies. Collected from the wet and marshy areas of Alappuzha and Ernakulam districts in Kerala state.

Specimens examined: Kerala, Alappuzha district: Ezhupunna, *Sunil 2318* (CALI); Ernakulam District: Ernakulam town, *Sunil 2801* (CALI); Moothakunnam, *Sunil 2608* (CALI).

Notes: This African species can be separated from the closely allied *K. melanospermus*, by the nature of its inflorescence (head) being subtended by 6 to 8 leafy bracts in contrast to 2 to 3 bracts in the latter.

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